CALGARY metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Jon Stewart's moment of Zen

Host retiring from The Daily Show after 16 years. Page 17

PICTURE YOURSELF WINTER-CYCLING

BikeBike owner Sean Carter frames himself at the south end of Calgary's Peace Bridge where, on Wednesday afternoon, the kickoff event for the second annual Winterpalooza will be held. The week-long festival of winter cycling will see a series of citywide events organized by various, independent groups. For the story, see page 6. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Long-term surgery waits miss the mark

Health care. Goal was to have patients under knife within 14 weeks

Alberta's provincial health body is poised to miss long-term wait-time targets for bad knees, ailing shoulders and throbbing gall bladders as the clock runs out on an ambitious five-year action plan.

Entitled Becoming the Best, the plan was released November 2010 and set numerous targets including waits for non-emergency surgeries.

The overall goal was to reduce waits to 14 weeks for all surgeries by March 2015, but specific attention was paid to knee and hip replacements, coronary artery bypasses and cataract surgery.

But analysis of December 2014 data, the most current available, indicates the average waits for certain procedures is still nearly three times the target and it appears not one surgical category has managed to slip under 20 weeks.

Alberta Health spokesman Timothy Wilson said certain areas have seen marked reductions. Knee-replacement surgeries, for example, averaged a 49-week wait in 2009-10 and that was down to just under 42 weeks for the 2013-14 year.

But December data shows the average wait for that procedure at 44.6 weeks and numerous others extended past the 30-week mark, including tonsil surgeries (32 weeks), shoulder operations (40 weeks) and hip replacements (32 weeks).

Alberta NDP leader Rachel Notley chalked up the 2010 action plan's release to being little more than a "public relations exercise."

"They're very good at setting targets for things a long ways down the road ... We live in a prosperous province and Albertans have every right to expect that our health-care system will be there for them and their family and loved ones when they need it."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

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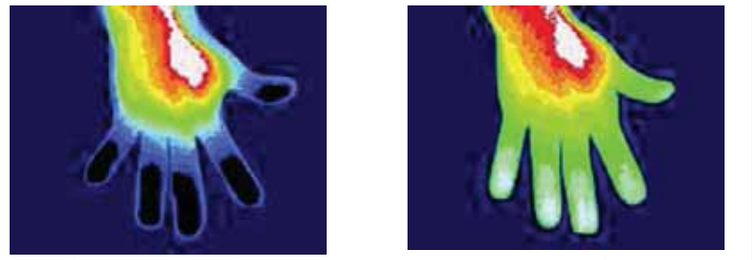

Dark = Low Blood Flow **Light = Increased Blood Flow**

Actual Thermographic Image of Hand shows circulation in hands before and after taking Neo 40 daily. On the Left, the fingertips are almost black showing little blood flow. On the Right, lighter colored fingers show increased blood flow after only 20 minutes.

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Edmonton.
City backs out of bid for Games

The tumbling price of oil has brought down Edmonton's hopes of hosting a Commonwealth Games, as the city announced it has lost the province's support and is backing out of the bid.

Mayor Don Iveson announced the cancellation of the city's bid for the 2022 Games on Tuesday afternoon and said the news once again shows the need for Alberta to come off the roller-coaster of fluctuating oil prices.

"Until our province's financial model is more stable long-term, Alberta will continue to struggle to realize our bolder aspirations," he said.

Iveson said Premier Jim Prentice met with him recently and said the province simply could no longer afford the games, which were expected to cost as much as $1 billion.

Iveson said that, while he was obviously disappointed, the city is not blind to what's happening in the province.

"We recognize the constraints the province is under right now. We're trying to be a team player," he said.

The city was competing to host the games against Durban, South Africa.

Bid chairman Reg Milley said that despite the desire of some countries to see the games in Africa, he's confident the city would have emerged on top.

"There is no doubt in my mind that we could have won this bid," he said.

Edmonton will consider a bid for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, and Commonwealth Games Canada has already given the city first right of refusal.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO IN EDMONTON

City mulls options to deal with money woes

Economy. More building, less building, staff cuts and pay cuts are ideas bandied about in response to downturn

ROBSON FLETCHER
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In response to an anticipated economic slowdown, Calgary should spend more on infrastructure, less on infrastructure or cut hundreds — if not thousands — of positions from its payroll, depending on which member of city council you ask.

The city budget is almost certainly going to be affected by the recent drop in oil prices, council heard Tuesday, although those impacts have yet to be directly felt.

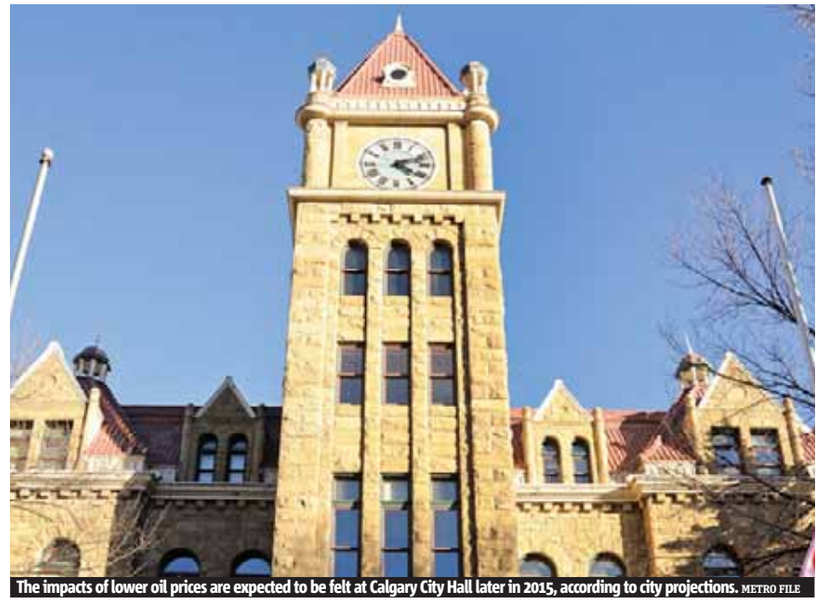
"But, as the year progresses, I expect to see the impact of the lower oil prices," said city economist Patrick Walters.

The city's operating budget will likely see "unfavourable variances" this year and next, according to chief financial officer Eric Sawyer, but those can "for sure" be covered by the city's existing contingencies.

"We've got satisfactory reserves and liquidity," he said.

That may also include some "vacancy management" of the 700 or so unfilled positions within the City of Calgary's ranks of roughly 15,000 employees, Sawyer added.

Coun. Sean Chu suggested the city trim its staff even further, by 1,000 to 2,000 positions, "through attrition, not layoffs."



The impacts of lower oil prices are expected to be felt at Calgary City Hall later in 2015, according to city projections. METRO FILE

"Maybe we should take pay cuts too — the whole city," Chu said, referring to both councillors and city staff.

Coun. Andre Chabot, who during last November's budget deliberations pushed successfully to cut some of the city's "pay as you go" spending on infrastructure, said Tuesday that it should be taken even further.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi, however, said now is actually an ideal time for the city to spend on capital projects, as "we have cash in the bank and prices are going down."

With slowing construction activity in the private sector, transportation general manager Mac Logan said the city is already seeing an uptick in the number of companies bidding on projects, "which does tend to lead to a lower price."

The city has not put out any "major tenders" recently, Logan cautioned, and asphalt and concrete prices have not budged.

City manager Jeff Fielding told council members they need to decide on a course of action — and soon.

"We recognize you're all on your own in terms of your own independent political positions on these types of matters, but we have to have a council direction and a council decision," he said.

Quoted

"There are two benefits to building in a downturn: the first, of course, is price. The second ... is employment, because it gives us the opportunity to stimulate the economy with our own buying power ... while building stuff that people need." Mayor Naheed Nenshi

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Calgary police contacting parents after boy, 4, allegedly molested at day home

Investigation. Business operator won't divulge client info, Metro told

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Calgary police are trying to contact the families of children who attended a northwest day home, after a four-year-old child was allegedly molested at the site in December 2014.

On Tuesday, police announced they had charged 51-year-old Miles Jarvis Clark with sexual assault and sexual interference with a child under the age of 16.

Charges were laid after the youth told his parents Clark had fondled him when they were alone at the site, known as Sue's Dayhome, located at 17 Rockyspring Rise NW.

Staff Sgt. Melanie Oncescu, of the CPS Child Abuse Unit, said the fact the day home was unlicensed means police don't know how many kids were clients. "It's a challenge," she said. "By speaking with the families that are currently at the day home and ... getting information from them of what other children attended the day home, that's how we're able to take those investigative steps."

Clark, who lived at the day home, but wasn't an employee, was arrested on Feb. 5 and was released on conditions, including being prohibited at the site during business hours.

Rebecca Kovatch, who lives across the street, said she was "completely shocked" by the allegations, calling them "the scariest thing that could ever happen being a parent."

Metro made several calls to Sue's Dayhome, and while an unidentified woman said the charges are rooted in "false accusations," she hung up and did not take questions.

Police say the operator was originally co-operating with the investigation, but is now refusing to provide client information, citing privacy concerns.

While police are working to track down client parents, Oncescu explained families they've contacted successfully "have been very co-operative" and are "very concerned."

"They're making decisions based on what's best for their family, but at this point in time, we haven't had anybody else identify as a victim."

Signs of abuse

- Day-home operator known to accused
- Unusual bruises and injuries could be signs of abuse
- Abuse could result in unusual levels of hostility, anger in children

Staff Sgt. Melanie Oncescu, of the CPS Child Abuse Unit, briefs reporters on charges laid against a 51-year-old man after he allegedly fondled a four-year-old boy in December 2014 at Sue's Dayhome, inset, located at 17 Rockyspring Rise NW. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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Crime. Homeless man killed in fight, police say

A drunken fight in southwest Calgary led to the city's fourth homicide of 2015, according to police.

Staff Sgt. Doug Andrus told reporters Tuesday that alcohol was a factor in the death of a homeless man in his 40s, identified by media reports as Robert Marx.

Police have charged 49-year-old Bart Dwight Miller with manslaughter in the incident, which they said happened at his home.

"It was a violent crime, for sure," Andrus said. "As for the cause of death, the autopsy is still ongoing."

Investigators believe the deceased was the victim of an assault that occurred before officers arrived at a home in the 1500 block of 28 Avenue SW at about 1 a.m. on Monday, responding to reports of an unwanted guest.

Staff Sgt. Doug Andrus
MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

When police arrived, they found the victim suffering from serious injuries.

Police said the man, who is of no fixed address, was rushed to hospital and pronounced dead on arrival.

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Feedback. Crowchild engagement plan sought

Officials have begun a "six-phase" study concerning the future of one of Calgary's busiest roads.

A past corridor study of Crowchild Trail came under fire when it was revealed that widening the road would require the demolition of several homes in the community of Scarboro.

The city will be establishing an engagement design team consisting of up to 20 residents who live in communities adjacent to Crowchild.

"The work of the engagement design team is not about finding design or traffic solutions for Crowchild Trail — that will come later," said Stephen Kay, transportation engineer and project manager for the study, in a release.

"The engagement design team will be tasked with developing an engagement program for the study."

You can apply to be on the team at calgary.ca/crowchild.

METRO

The joy of cycling extends to winter

Transportation. Winterpalooza celebrates bicyclists in Calgary, no matter the season or weather

ROBSON FLETCHER
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Winter cyclists will unite across the city, starting Wednesday, for a week of events aimed at celebrating and encouraging year-round bike riding.

Winterpalooza, now in its second year, sees a series of independently organized events brought together under a single banner.

"It's volunteer-driven and people are encouraged to put them on the (online) calendar," said BikeBike owner Sean Carter, who's also helping to organize the kick-off event on Wednesday: The Winterpalooza Photo Booth.

"We're really excited about it," said co-organizer Katherine Glowacz, an active transportation education planner with the City of Calgary. "Really, we're all about increasing awareness about people's transportation choices and options, year-round."

The event will offer winter cyclists the chance to have their photo taken for free — in a giant picture frame — at the south end of the Peace Bridge from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., with hot chocolate, cupcakes and BikeBike gift cards handed out to participants.

"We're just trying to put a face to the people that winter cycle and kind of show that it's not all these winter-warrior-type people; it's average folks that are choosing to cycle," Carter said.

Other events include ice-cycle races on Friday, a "polar run" on Saturday (in which participants will ride around Kensington dressed either in their underwear or full-on bear costumes), a bike scavenger hunt on Sunday, and a poker run on Monday.

More information can be found at cyclepalooza.ca.

More online

For more news visit metronews.ca.

An image from last year's Winterpalooza Photo Booth in Calgary.
COURTESY BIKEBIKE/CITY OF CALGARY

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Sex shops expect sales bump as 50 Shades of Grey hits theatres

Film. Retailers get ready for surge in BDSM interest

JENNIFER FRIESEN
calgary@metronews.ca

A Little More Interesting on 17 Avenue has stocked up on BDSM items in preparation for the theatrical release of 50 Shades of Grey. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

With Valentine's Day coming up, Calgary sex shop owners are expecting more couples to buy bondage items than the usual chocolate hearts this year.

The film adaptation of 50 Shades of Grey is hitting theatres in Calgary on Friday, causing retailers to ready their shelves for a surge of interest in dominance, submission, sadism and masochism (known collectively as BDSM).

Danielle Carrington, manager of A Little More Interesting, said after the release of the book in 2011, her store saw sales jump by 300 per cent.

"It was a huge increase," she said. "So we're very stocked on BDSM items featured in the book, with the expectation that we'll see a similar increase."

And she's not alone.

Don Wilhelm, co-owner of the Little Shop of Pleasures, said his BDSM sales still haven't gone down since the book's release.

"It was a huge shot in the arm," said Wilhelm. "We got at least a 35-per-cent jump across the board in both stores and it hasn't slowed down."

Carrington said the clientele isn't really changing though — just the items, with restraint systems, paddles, and Ben Wa balls gaining more popularity than ever.

"I think people are more willing to have that conversation with their partners now that it's considered less taboo," said Carrington. "People are more willing to experiment or play around with it."

Crime. 'Threatening email' targeted up to 20 schools, suspect demanded Bitcoins

Police presence has been beefed up at a number of city schools after officers and some administrators received a "threatening email" last week.

But investigators have determined there's "no validity" to the threats, Calgary police spokesman Kevin Brookwell said Tuesday.

"Basically, what it was is it involved virtual currency — Bitcoins," Brookwell said of the threat. "There were threats made that there would be explosive devices detonated at certain schools at certain times if a certain amount of Bitcoin currency wasn't put into an account."

Numerous sources have confirmed to Metro that up to 20 schools were targeted by the perpetrator and some of the buildings were operated by the Calgary Board of Education.

Police are now working with law-enforcement groups across North America to nail down the source of the email.

On Friday, police did confirm some tense moments at Ernest Manning High School after a suspicious package was reported, but it was later determined to be an abandoned lunch kit. A note from the principal at Robert Thirsk High School that was obtained by Metro indicates that school was also targeted by a threat.

On Tuesday, Thirsk principal Christine Meaden informed parents in a letter that her school would be among those monitored closely by police.

"The safety and security of our students and staff is of utmost importance to the CBE," Meaden wrote. "Our school has institute appropriate security and safety precautions in consultation with (Calgary police) and appreciates the co-operation of students and parents."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Information

Anyone with information about the threats is asked to call police at 403-266-1234.

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$989	$989	$999	$999	$1069	$1159

EDINBURGH	LONDON, UK	MANCHESTER	GENEVA	ISTANBUL	ZURICH
JUNE 19, 2015 – AUGUST 22, 2015	FEBRUARY 18, 2015 – MARCH 22, 2015	JULY 3, 2015 – AUGUST 22, 2015	FEBRUARY 18, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015	FEBRUARY 18, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015	FEBRUARY 18, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015
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Tories won't restore funds for child death reviews

Alberta's Progressive Conservatives have refused to restore $275,000 in funding for Child and Youth Advocate Del Graff to help him investigate deaths of children in government care.

PC backbencher Genia Leskiw said Graff had not made his case on why the refund was critical.

"I really don't believe that they've sharpened their pencils as sharp as they could have, and there are a lot of other agencies that look after youth," said Leskiw following the decision Tuesday of the all-party legislative offices committee.

"Tough choices have to be made and … everybody has to share in those tough choices."

Graff said the money was needed to keep up with responsibilities added to his mandate last spring.

The youth advocate said the cash was to pay for three new investigators and two new analysts who were hired to handle the extra workload.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Opposition criticism

Liberal Laurie Blakeman told the committee that children are paying for the Tory government's failure to follow through on its long-standing promise to wean Alberta's day-to-day spending off historically volatile energy prices.

- "What are you going to do when oil hits $20 a barrel? Stop teaching children? C'mon," Blakeman said.

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Dakota Oviatt, centre, joined YARD members, from left, Jesse Rabinovitch, Jermaine Campbell, Deanna Qualtieri and Const. Stacey O'Connor on Tuesday to discuss the program's evaluation at Bishop McNally High School.

JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

YARD keeping youth out of crime: Study

Outreach. Research shows 41% decrease in criminal charges among participants of gang prevention program

JENNIFER FRIESEN
calgary@metronews.ca

At 17 years old, Dakota Oviatt is about to graduate from high school. But this isn't the path he was always on.

Oviatt was charged with assault when he was still just a teenager, amid a life of violence and alcohol abuse.

"I was doing things that would take me down the wrong path in life," he said.

"Drinking, partying, getting into fights — whatever my friends did, just to keep myself busy."

Once out on probation, he reached out to the local program Youth at Risk Development (YARD) and soon began to gain "a better grip on life."

Launched in 2008, YARD is a gang-prevention and early intervention program for at-risk youth. Social workers work alongside police officers and schools to steer youth away from a life of crime.

On Tuesday, YARD released an independent evaluation of the program, finding a 41 per cent decrease in criminal charges for their youth, with 69 per cent of participants going a year without criminal charges.

Trevor Daroux, deputy chief of police, said that the research validated the program's benefits.

He said the program plays a "vital role" in crime prevention, which ultimately reduces the number of victims.

"When we speak to victims … every single victim tells us one thing: they say they wish the crime never occurred in the first instance," he said. "Prevention is the best way to reduce victimization."

Oviatt said that without the program, he'd be "stuck in a gutter." Now he hopes to join a program like YARD after he graduates.

"I'd really like to do what they do," he said. "Help youth my own age, help the criminal youth, (to) get them on the right path."

Quoted

"When we speak to victims … every single victim tells us one thing: they say they wish the crime never occurred in the first instance.... Prevention is the best way to reduce victimization."

Trevor Daroux, deputy chief of police

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*All stats from the 2014 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, prepared for the City of Calgary.

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Vatican may be asked to repeal old Papal edicts

Human rights. Many say Catholic decrees of 1455 and 1493 allowed for the ill treatment of aboriginal peoples

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is weighing whether to ask the Vatican to repeal the Papal Bulls of Discovery that granted 15th-century explorers the right to conquer the New World and the "heathen" aboriginals.

Chair Murray Sinclair says the commission examining the impact of Canada's Indian residential schools is looking carefully at the 1455 and 1493 Catholic edicts as part of its final report. Many argue the proclamations legitimized the treatment of aboriginal people as "less than human."

Crown sovereignty in Canada can be traced back to those papal bulls, and neither Canada nor the United States has repudiated them, Sinclair said.

A growing chorus in Canada is calling on the Vatican to help begin a new relationship with aboriginal people on equal footing. The discovery bulls, and others in the same vein that followed, gave Catholic explorers "full and free power, authority and jurisdiction of every kind" and outlined their "duty to lead the peoples dwelling in those islands and countries to embrace the Christian religion."

If aboriginal people refused, the Vatican granted its envoys the authority to enslave and kill.

If the commission recommends the bulls be rescinded, Sinclair said, it has to weigh the legal implications, which could strike at the core of Crown sovereignty over land.

The United Nations appointed a special rapporteur in 2009 who found the bulls lie "at the root of the violations of indigenous peoples' human rights." The edicts have resulted in the "mass appropriation of the lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples," the UN found. They also form the legal basis of many modern-day land-claim disputes, it said.

But for advocates like Keith Matthew, former chief of Simpcw First Nation in British Columbia, it's about "righting a historic wrong."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jordan's Principle

A study suggests aboriginal children often get poorer health care than other children while governments argue over who pays the bill.

- Co-author Vandna Sinha, a professor at McGill University, says the problem persists despite the federal government's position that there are no violations of the so-called Jordan's Principle.
- Jordan's Principle holds that no aboriginal child should suffer denials, delays or disruptions of health services available to other children due to jurisdictional disputes.

One twin gets part of dad's liver as the other waits

Michael Wagner of Kingston, Ont., the father of Binh, left, and Phuoc, underwent an operation Tuesday to give part of his liver to one of the ailing three-year-old twin girls. Phuoc and Binh both have Alagille syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects the liver, heart and other organs. A post on the family Facebook page says Phuoc's new liver "looks great," but notes the next few days will be "critical." Doctors decided which of the twins would receive the transplant after the family said it could not do so. The Wagners are still waiting for a liver donor for their other daughter, Binh.

PHOTO: HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE; TEXT: THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mohamed Fahmy case

Harper has spoken with Egypt's president: PMO

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has reached out to Egypt's president to secure the release of jailed Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy. "The Prime Minister has communicated with the president on this case," a spokesman said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health

Not vaccinating kids 'irresponsible,' Ambrose says

The federal health minister says she can't help but get emotional over some parents' decision not to get their children vaccinated.

"I find it really irresponsible," Rona Ambrose said Tuesday, adding that anyone who still believes a fraudulent 1990s study linking vaccines to autism should speak to their doctor. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Here are just a few we're offering this month:

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Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 6:30 pm in the Irene Lewis Atrium in the Stan Gran Centre. Call 403.284.8641 or Email ma.info@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST

Interested in a career where graduates have flexible job opportunities in clinical environments or at-home employment?

The Medical Transcriptionist program at SAIT is the perfect solution as it trains students to interpret, transcribe, and edit medical dictation detailing patient health care during an illness or after an injury with flexible job opportunities. Start your new career in just one year.

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 6:00 pm in Room NH307 in the Senator Burns Building. Visit sait.ca/infosessions to confirm your attendance or for more information.

BROADCAST SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY

Looking for a unique career that combines your resourcefulness with your technical expertise? The Broadcast Systems Technology program at SAIT Polytechnic is the perfect answer as it focuses on the technical aspects of the broadcast industry, and qualifies graduates for well-paying jobs that are in high-demand. Get trained on emerging digital systems so you can start a career you will love in the exciting world of audio and video technologies!

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in Room E114 in the John Ware Building. Call 403.284.8081 or Email bxst.info@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

GEOSCIENCE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS EXPLORATION INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

Are you interested in an oil and gas career that combines geology and geophysics and computer science? If so, then SAIT's two year, Geoscience Information Technology diploma program is for you.

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in Room MD217 in the Stan Grad Centre. Call 403.210.5753 or Email gsit.info@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

JOURNALISM AND PHOTOJOURNALISM

Interested in a career that combines your creativity with your resourcefulness? The Journalism and photojournalism programs at SAIT are the perfect solution as they focus on communications, News writing, and photojournalism. Get trained at SAIT, and start a career that you will love.

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in Room H101 in the Senator Burns Building. Call 403.284.8849 or Email ja.info@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

LIBRARY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Interested in a career that combines your high-level organization skills with technology? The Library Information Technology program at SAIT is the perfect solution as it focuses on database searching, how to access information and helping people find information. Get trained at SAIT, and start a career that you will love.

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in Room H105 in the Senator Burns Building. Call 403.284.8849 or Email lit.info@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Get wired for a bright future. The Electrical Engineering Technology program offers comprehensive study in electrical & electronic theory, technical mathematics & computers, and report writing & drafting. As an Electrical Engineering Technologist you'll manage electrical energy from renewable and conventional energy sources and will be able to work on the power systems for a city, industrial plants or residential homes.

Join us on Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in Room KA338 in the Johnson-Cobbe Energy Centre. Call 403.284.8451 or Email energy.mse@sait.ca to confirm your attendance or for more information.

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SAIT POLYTECHNIC

Fighting picks up ahead of peace talks

Ukraine. Latest escalation of violence leaves 12 dead and 64 wounded as European leaders prepare to meet with Russia today

Fighting intensified Tuesday in eastern Ukraine ahead of crucial peace talks set for Wednesday, with both sides claiming significant advances. The government accused the Russian-backed rebels of shelling a town far behind the front lines, killing 12 people and leaving scores wounded.

The fighting, which the UN says has killed more than 5,300 people since April, comes ahead of a summit planned for Wednesday in Minsk involving the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.

Diplomatic relations

Merkel has been vocal about reaching a peaceful solution between Russia and Ukraine.

- **Arming Ukraine.** Despite meeting with Merkel, U.S. President Barack Obama is unsure whether the U.S. will arm Ukraine with lethal defensive weapons if talks prove fruitless.
- **Russia.** The Kremlin has warned the West against sending weapons, which it says could destabilize the situation.

"Tomorrow's meeting in Minsk offers one of the last chances to declare an unconditional cease-fire," Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. aid worker held by ISIL confirmed dead by her captors

Turi Whiting of Minneapolis leaves a bouquet of flowers at a "Pray for Kayla" sign in downtown Prescott, Ariz., on Monday. Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old American woman held by militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), has been confirmed dead, said her parents and the Obama administration on Tuesday. The White House said Mueller's family received a private message from her captors over the weekend, information that has been authenticated by U.S. intelligence. On Friday, ISIL claimed Mueller had been killed during a Jordanian airstrike, a claim immediately denied by Jordan. The Pentagon has confirmed she did not die in one of the strikes and was killed by ISIL. ROB SCHUMACHER/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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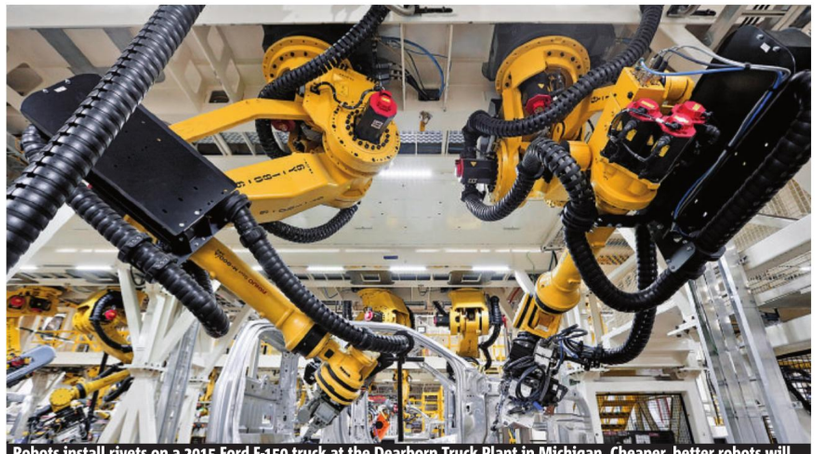
Robots will cut labour costs in Canada 24%, report says

Growth. Robot usage forecast to rise 10% a year in the world's 25-biggest exporting countries, up from current 2% to 3%



Robots install rivets on a 2015 Ford F-150 truck at the Dearborn Truck Plant in Michigan. Cheaper, better robots will replace human workers in factories at a faster pace over the next decade, pushing manufacturing labour costs down 16 per cent, a report from the Boston Consulting Group said Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Cheaper, better robots are expected to cut labour costs at Canadian factories by 24 per cent over the next decade as more companies replace human workers at a faster pace, according to a report issued Tuesday.

Globally, labour savings are expected to be reduced by some 16 per cent by 2025, the report by the Boston Consulting Group predicts.

Robots are getting cheaper. The cost of owning and operating a robotic spot welder, for instance, has tumbled from $182,000 in 2005 to $133,000 last year, and will drop to $103,000 by 2025, Boston Consulting says.

And the new machines can do more things. Old robots could only operate in predictable environments. The newer ones use improved sensors to react to the unexpected.

Robots will cut labour costs by 33 per cent in South Korea, 25 per cent in Japan and 22 per cent in the United States and Taiwan. Only 10 per cent of jobs that can be automated have already been taken by robots. By 2025, the machines will have more than 23 per cent, Boston Consulting forecasts.

In a separate report, RBC Global Asset Management notes that robots can be reprogrammed far faster and more efficiently than humans can be retrained when products are updated or replaced — a crucial advantage at a time when smartphones and other products quickly fade into obsolescence.

The rise of robots won't be limited to developed countries with their aging, high-cost workforces. Even low-wage China will use robots to slash labour costs by 18 per cent, Boston consulting predicts.

Increasing automation is likely to change the way companies evaluate where to open and expand factories. Boston Consulting expects that manufacturers will "no longer simply chase cheap labour." Factories will employ fewer people, and those that remain are more likely to be highly skilled. That could lure more manufacturers back to Canada and the United States from lower-wage emerging market countries.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cyberattacks. Hackers can't be kept out: Experts

As hackers routinely overwhelm computer defences, experts say cybersecurity is beyond due for an overhaul.

Their message: Neutralize attackers once they're inside networks rather than fixating on trying to keep them out.

According to U.S. cybersecurity company FireEye, 229 days is the median length of time attackers lurk inside their victim's computers before being detected or revealing themselves, underscoring the weakness of conventional tools in identifying intruders.

The traditional defences must "have a description of the bad guys before they can help you find them," said Dave Merkel, chief technology officer at FireEye Inc.

Experts aren't recommending organizations stop deploying perimeter defences such as antivirus software or firewalls. But they say a strategy that could be likened to laying traps is needed to counter the sophisticated hacks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newsweek Twitter feed

The Newsweek Twitter feed was briefly hacked Tuesday, purportedly by Cyber Caliphate, a hacker group affiliated with Islamic State.

- The posts included a message targeting U.S. President Barack Obama, his wife Michelle and their daughters.

Market Minute

DOLLAR
79.53¢
(-0.69¢)

TSX 15,112.52 (+11.82)

OIL $50.02 US (-$2.84)

GOLD $1,232.20 US (-$9.30)

Natural gas: $2.677 (+8.0¢)
Dow Jones: 17,868.76 (+139.55)

Robot getting artificial intelligence

Japanese mobile carrier Softbank said Tuesday it will incorporate artificial intelligence technology from IBM into its empathetic robot Pepper that goes on sale in Japan this month.

The AI engine Watson is already used in health care, travel and insurance services in English, but an adaptation was needed to make it work and think in Japanese, said Steve Gold, vice-president, IBM Watson Group. Unlike other cognitive technology that responds rather mechanically, Watson can learn over time like a human brain, and understands the concept of probability, which makes it very sophisticated and more human-like, according to IBM.

Watson will be used in Pepper, Softbank's empathetic robot going on sale in Japan this month for 198,000 yen (about $2,000) and will make for a smarter, more charming companion, he said.

Pepper has a stunned face a bit like C3PO in Star Wars and moves around on wheels. In early demonstrations it was a bit mechanical in its responses. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VOICES

VACCINES FOR KIDS SHOULD BE MANDATORY

KRISTEN THOMPSON
readers@metronews.ca

Ready for your daily dose of controversy? I believe strongly in childhood vaccinations. Wait, I'm not done. I believe they should be mandatory.

I can feel thousands of readers bristling right now. This is a sensitive topic because most of us love our children, and most of us want what is best for them. But that doesn't mean we are always acting in their best interest. And that's when the government should step in.

Here's why: We need a 95 per cent vaccination rate for herd immunity to protect against contagious diseases, and according to UNICEF, Canada's rate hovers around 84 per cent. So until we raise the immunization rates, we are all at risk.

If you think the government has no right to meddle in how we care for our children, you're wrong. It meddles every day, and rightly so.

It intervenes when children are raised in filthy homes, allowed to ride in cars without seatbelts, left unattended at home, or refused life-saving medical treatment. Religion, culture and ideology do not trump these laws.

Why is it different when parents say "no" to childhood vaccines?

Maybe because it was less of an issue a decade ago. Vaccination rates are declining, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, due in part to a growing culture of distrust in big pharma and regulatory agencies. What this means is we need better education campaigns and more transparency into vaccine safety and oversight.

The reality is we've been inoculating against deadly diseases for more than 200 years, and the science is well-established: Vaccines are safe and a crucial component of childhood and community health. Ingredients undergo rigorous testing and serious reactions — which are incredibly rare — are highly monitored.

The diseases we vaccinate against can be fatal — they kill hundreds of thousands of children in developing countries every year. And they can return when vaccination rates decline. That means the benefits of vaccines by far outweigh the risks.

So why do we allow parents to gamble with kids' lives — their own kids, or the lives of newborns and other peoples' children who can't be immunized for health reasons — by refusing vaccinations? Especially when the science is so clear, and the dangers so terrible?

The diseases we vaccinate against kill hundreds of thousands of children in developing countries every year. GETTY IMAGES

This is not a debate about individual rights versus public health, because kids are not extensions of us — they are individuals with their own rights.

The debate is where to draw the line when it comes to parental freedom of choice.

Parenthood, in the wise words of my father, is not a right but a privilege, and that's an important distinction. It's not our "right" to make any choice we want for our kids, it's our duty to make wise ones, ones that set them on the best path.

That's why when a parent makes a choice on behalf of the child that puts that child or others at serious risk, regardless of their intentions, society should step in.

Is this dangerous government overreach? Slovenia and Croatia don't think so. Both countries have made vaccinations mandatory for nine specific diseases.

Croatia's Constitutional Court said it best when it ruled "the child's right to health is more than the rights of parents to the (wrong) choice."

That country's decision to overrule parental freedom for the sake of community well-being means that diphtheria, whooping cough and measles have been eradicated there.

In fact, 14 European countries have at least one mandatory vaccination included in their program.

So what would happen if Canada also imposed mandatory vaccinations? Many parents would be up in arms. But ... so what?

We live in a highly relativistic society and tend to wring our hands endlessly over respect for other people's points of view, even when those views are contrarian. But when people choose to reject clear scientific evidence in favour of their own misguided beliefs, the hand-wringing should stop.

Especially when the well-being of children is involved.

3-DNA-sourced babies

'There is a line and we're crossing it. I think we can cross it if we are extremely cautious': Bioethicist

With the three-parent IVF technique recently getting the green light in the U.K., debate is brewing in Canada about the controversial procedure.

While it is currently illegal in Canada under the Assisted Human Reproduction Act of 2004, proponents say it would allow couples to have healthy children in cases where the mother might otherwise pass on mitochondrial disease. Moreover, these children would be almost entirely genetically their own offspring.

Metro asked Kerry Bowman, a bioethicist with the University of Toronto, for his take. The following has been edited down from a longer interview:

You've said before that you give the technique cautious approval. Why?
Approval is a bit strong. I get it with three-person reproduction and why you would want to do this. By doing so you can hopefully prevent the suffering and early death of babies and young children. There's something called mitochondrial disease and if you do this technique, hopefully — if it goes well — you could avoid that. But we are crossing a line. Some people say what we are really doing is genetically altering an unborn child. We're actually changing what's called the human germ line. And some people say, 'Well, what does that matter?' But when people are looking at their identity, they're studying their ancestry and who we are as people, our geographical origins from an evolutionary point of view, migration point of view — that's all traced through mitochondrial DNA. Identity isn't necessarily about percentages; it's about what your story is.

Is three-parent IVF a fair term?

"Some people would say it is an overly dramatic term and it's inaccurate, because there's really two genetic parents. I don't really agree with that, because the child wouldn't be born if you didn't have the third input from the third parent, so I think it is actually an accurate use of language."
Kerry Bowman, bioethicist

So you're saying this is significantly different from other reproductive assistance technologies? Yes, this is the first time it would be inheritable, passed down from generation to generation. So there are a lot of things to consider. What are the risks? Unknown. There are no foreseeable risks but that doesn't mean no risks will occur.

What other applications could this type of technology have? We don't have the capacity yet, but this is the type of technique that could be used to genetically enhance unborn babies, so designer, babies, essentially. I don't think that would be the right thing to do. But I think with mitochondrial DNA, the biggest thing is that there is a line and we're crossing it. I think we can cross it if we are extremely cautious.

What specific policies would you suggest we adopt then? I fully acknowledge that right now it is illegal, but a lot has changed since 2004. A lot. So I think you would need to go case by case, and the only cases that would be allowed — if it were going to be allowed — would be for cases of mitochondrial disease. And I think it would be wise to wait to see what happens in Britain.

A simplified explanation:

The technique takes the nucleus of a mother's egg and places it in a donor's egg, from which the nucleus has been removed. This new egg contains the donor's mitochondria (but not the mother's). It is then fertilized with the father's sperm.

- **In this way, the child inherits the vast majority of its DNA from the mother and father, but inherits the mitochondrial DNA from the donor mother.**

INTERVIEWED BY EMINA GAMULIN/METRO

metro
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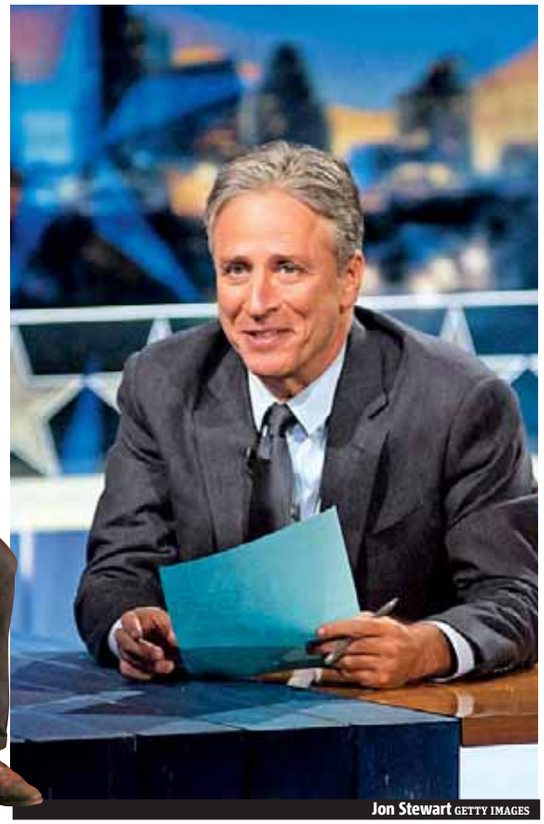
Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES



Jon Stewart GETTY IMAGES

Stewart writes his Dear Jon letter to Comedy Central

Jon Stewart will be leaving The Daily Show after nearly 17 years, he announced to the audience of Tuesday night's episode. The comedian, writer and director took over in 1999 from Craig Kilborn, slowly turning the fledgling newscast spoof into a cultural and political force, taking politicians on both sides of the aisle, the media and even himself to task for any misstep, while also launching the careers of Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell and John Oliver.

"For the better part of the last two decades, I have had the incredible honour and privilege of working with Jon Stewart. His comedic brilliance is second to none," Comedy Central president Michele Ganeless said in a statement.

"Jon has been at the heart of Comedy Central, championing and nurturing the best talent in the industry, in front of and behind the camera. Through his unique voice and vision, The Daily Show has become a cultural touchstone for millions of fans and an unparalleled platform for political comedy that will endure for years to come."

No set date for Stewart's departure was announced, though Ganeless did say the host would continue on the show "until later this year." Stewart first took a leave of absence from the show to direct his feature film, Rosewater, leaving Oliver to sit in for him.

Weird Al gets Whiplashed

Weird Al Yankovic is taking the prep for his upcoming world tour very seriously. Maybe a little too seriously, according to a new College Humor video that pits Yankovic against Oscar nominee J.K. Simmons' terrorizing Whiplash music teacher. If you've always loved tense Oscar movie standoffs and accordion-drenched polka, but never dreamed of the two flavours blended together, this is your moment.

Weird Al Yankovic

Double the Spider-Man, half the Garfield

Good news for comic book movie fans, but not so much good news for Amazing Spider-Man star Andrew Garfield. Marvel has hashed out a deal to regain creative control of one of its highest-profile characters without the beleaguered Sony having to lose one of its two remaining bankable franchises — the other being Bond.

According to a statement from Marvel, "the new Spider-Man will first appear in a Marvel film from Marvel's Cinematic Universe. Sony Pictures will thereafter release the next instalment of its $4-billion Spider-Man franchise, on July 28, 2017, in a film that will be co-produced by Kevin Feige and his expert team at Marvel, and Amy Pascal, who oversaw the franchise launch for the studio 13 years ago. Together, they will collaborate on a new creative direction for the web-slinger. Sony Pictures will continue to finance, distribute, own and have final creative control of the Spider-Man films."

Unfortunately, when they say "the new Spider-Man," they're not kidding. The Hollywood Reporter claims that current Spidey star Andrew Garfield will not be involved. Now, the real question is which Marvel film Spider-Man first pops up in. The smart money is on Captain America: Civil War, due out in May 2016, but wouldn't it be awesome if he snuck into this year's Avengers sequel?

Andrew Garfield

SCENE

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Uma, is that you?

Uma Thurman GETTY IMAGES

A change of face for Thurman

You might just have to take our word for it that you're looking at a photograph of Kill Bill star Uma Thurman, who hit the red carpet for NBC's The Slap looking nearly unrecognizable. Her minimal makeup look seems like a perfect opportunity to illustrate just how much of a difference eyeshadow and eyeliner can make. Seriously, it's remarkable. Or maybe it's just the contrast between the very red lipstick and the nearly makeup-free eyes. Or the lack of distinctive bangs. Or the fact that she didn't really feel like smiling.

NED EHRBAR / MWN

The Slap a star-powered character study

TV. Eight-episode series examines the aftermath of a moment of discipline

LISA WEIDENFELD
Metro in New York City

Peter Sarsgaard and Zach Quinto star in The Slap. HANDOUT

The Slap represents a new step for NBC. The hour-long show is a drama based on an Australian program, but it's a limited episode run, with only eight shows in its season, and a serious list of prestige players took part. The Kids Are All Right director Lisa Cholodenko directed every episode, playwright Jon Robin Baitz wrote it, and the show stars Peter Sarsgaard, Thandie Newton, Zachary Quinto and Uma Thurman. The action centres around a group of Brooklynites whose urbane existence is shaken up when one of them (Quinto) slaps another's misbehaving child at backyard barbecue.

Asked what it's like playing the person at the heart of the action, Quinto says, "It's only the centre of the controversy because it's the incident. There are so many other things that are happening and there are so many other levels of complexity in each of these characters. They all have their own epicentre of disaster in their lives."

The series examines ideas of parenting in America, always a heady topic, as there's a clash between the Greek immigrant family on one side of the debate, and the longtime U.S. residents on the other. Is the slap child abuse, or an accepted mode of discipline for a rowdy child? Despite the fact that these are all people who are close enough to attend a party together, Quinto says the characters will "very clearly" divide into camps, but on a broader scale, he hopes audiences are more torn.

"I think if it works, there'll be a lot of going back and forth," says Quinto.

"I like to hold a mirror up to the audience and I like for them to take responsibility for their feelings and their thoughts and their beliefs."

It's a new direction for Quinto, who many audiences know from his work as Spock or as the villainous Sylar on Heroes.

"I was thrilled to get the opportunity to do this. I've known Robbie (Baitz) for years. I'm a big admirer of his work," says Quinto.

"I'm drawn to things that invite an audience in and light a little bit of a fire to generate some discourse, dialogue, debate, and it doesn't give the audience the answer. There's no clear-cut point of view with this story and I like that."

Genre hero

- Though Quinto is making the change from genre to a more straightforward drama, he's still getting into trouble. "(My character) Harry is arguably the villain of the series, but in a very human way, so for me it was about getting into a world that was not elevated or supernatural or science fiction. This is a very human world. So now that I've had the opportunity to do that, I feel a sense of closure on the sort of villainous aspect of my persona."
- **Just how goofy can Quinto get?** He says he's "looking forward to a future of varied opportunities," and jokes that what's coming next will be "some lighter fare."

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Jake Johnson has made up a new rule for True American, the show's beloved drinking game. HANDOUT

What's New with the Girl?

TV. Jake Johnson chats about his character, his cast and the game that's caused a stir

LISA WEIDENFELD
Metro in New York City

Midway through its fourth season, New Girl is still finding new situations to throw its oddball loft residents into. This season has seen the characters exploring new careers, as Winston tries life as a cop, Jess takes on leadership responsibilities at her school and Nick and Schmidt decide to team up and sell sweatsuit suits. But that doesn't mean the show isn't going to give the people a little bit of what they love about the show. We talked to Jake Johnson (Nick) about what's ahead for the show, and a new confusing rule for their famous history-based drinking game, True American.

Will we see more True American this year?
Absolutely. I think we'll see True American for as long as the show goes.

Are you an expert on the game at this point?
Here's the reality, and it's disappointing for fans who want it to be something it's not. I say this as an expert, because I've been in every True American scene, and I was there when it started: There are no rules.

You guys are just making it up?
The guy who wrote the first one, Luvh Rakhe, came to set and said, we haven't figured this one out. It's some sort of a drinking game. And then we all started saying things that we used to do in drinking games.

So you just throw in anything you can think of.
It's like the chop suey of drinking games. Anything you got, throw it in. If you're playing quarters and want to turn it into True American, you can. Just add it, and it's True American.

Well, there's a president on the coin.
That's right. That's what it is. You have to say a president if you hit it, then you point to who drinks and that's your vice-president. If they don't know the vice-president of the president you named, they have to take two drinks.

We just saw Nick get dumped. What's coming up for him?
Nick's going to be single a bit. I'd like to see Nick date a little bit. I'd like to see him find somebody. I just texted Liz Meriwether, maybe it's time Nick gets in a relationship. Hopefully she'll listen. I'd like to date someone who's a really good actor and do a bunch of stories with them.

Look out for it

Anything else you can tease about what's coming up on the show?

- Justin Long is coming back, Josh Gad is coming back. So we got some good stuff coming up.

Spinoff series

Bob Odenkirk stars in Better Call Saul. HANDOUT

Saul debut among most watched in cable history

AMC's new Breaking Bad spinoff got off to an excellent start on Sunday evening, attracting 6.9 million viewers. This was the second-most-watched premiere in U.S. cable history, just behind the first episode of The Closer.

Bolstered by The Walking Dead as its lead-in, Better Call Saul premiered Sunday, Feb. 8 on AMC to an audience of 6.9 million. The prequel series about the lawyer Saul Goodman got off to a much stronger start than Breaking Bad, which debuted in January 2008 to 1.4 million viewers. AFP

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LIFE 3

Cali's sand and surf combo

Adventure. Just a quick flight separates ski and surf in the Golden State's south

MIKE DOJC
life@metronews.ca

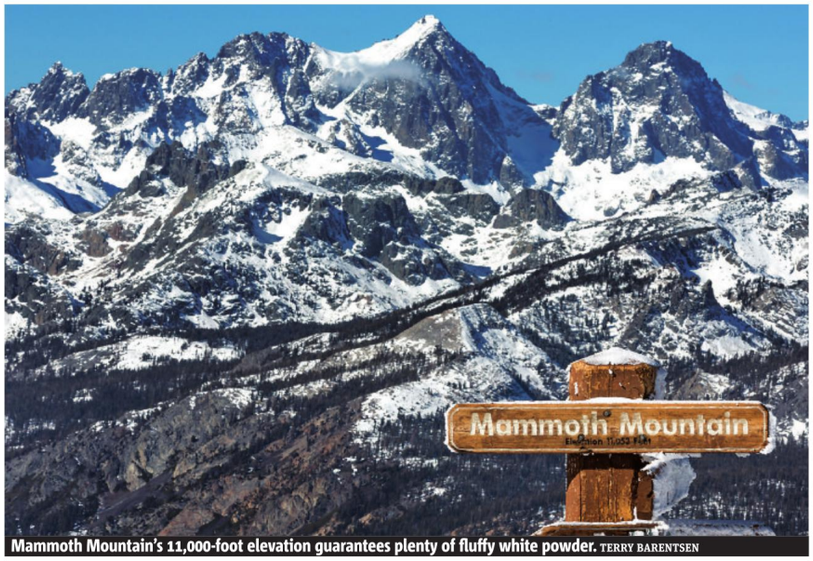
Shredding powder and riding frothy swells may be mutually exclusive pursuits but just as chefs routinely indulge palates by putting lobster and steak on the same plate, skiing and surfing don't have to be getaway strangers, even in the dead of winter. Indulge in the best of both worlds in Southern California by pairing a ski vacation at Mammoth Mountain with some surfing in San Diego.

Some like it cold

Mammoth Lakes, a quick flight from San Diego, L.A. or San Francisco, is a snowy town that sits atop a sleeping volcano in a valley on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. A West Coast winter wonderland, Mammoth is home to the third most popular ski mountain in the U.S. after Vail and Breckenridge. Forget about California concrete — that heavy, wet, gloppy snow associated with other parts of the Golden State.

Mammoth's pillowy white stuff is as fluffy and cuddly as the Ice Age flicks. The mountain tends to get covered in a lighter snow owing to its 11,000-foot elevation, and because it's predominantly north-facing, the snowpack stays fresher longer, allowing for an extended season. The mountain has stayed open as late as July 4.

Intermediate skiers keen to climb to the summit for a sick 360-degree view of alpine peaks and indelible white-capped minarets are in luck. Exit the mountain-topping Panorama Gondola and peel right toward the blue square-rated Upper Road Runner, a leisurely three-mile-long cat track that offers plenty of scenic vistas as it winds its way back down to Main Lodge.



Mammoth Mountain's 11,000-foot elevation guarantees plenty of fluffy white powder. TERRY BARENTSEN

Sky high

Keep the adrenalin pumping by jumping off a 300-foot cliff at Torrey Pines Gliderport. Tethered to a giant kite, you'll soar like an eagle over Black's Beach and one of Cali's most storied golf courses. Tandem paraglides with a USHPA-certified instructor are $175 and be sure to get there a little early to sign and initial a sheaf of paperwork about as thick as a small-town phone book.

If ski and surf aren't enough, try paragliding over Black's Beach. TERRY BARENTSEN

Stay: Steps from the village and a gondola to the slopes, the Westin Monache Resort puts you in the heart of Mammoth. Plus, the breathtaking Mountain view from the outdoor hot tubs doesn't hurt.

Après-ski

For a taste of Cali-style barbecue, line up for a table at The Smokeyard BBQ & Chop Shop in Mammoth village. The shop is ostensibly a purveyor of smoky, finger-licking carnivorous delights; their brontosaurus-sized beef ribs will lull you into a Flinstonian meat coma. But outside an array of slow-cooked animal-flesh options are a couple unexpected menu items that shout out to the South African proprietors' culinary heritage. There's a mildly spiced durban curry as well as potjiekos (a popular Rainbow Nation stew) on offer. Next, toast to the high altitude lifestyle with a brew or two from Mammoth Brewing Company. Sip on a Fire & Eisbock, practically Mammoth in a bottle. Lava rocks heated up under an open fire dropped into the boil lend it a caramelized flavour and post-fermentation freeze distillation amps up the alcohol content.

Some like it hot

San Diego's 90 kilometres of sun-kissed playa has something for both beach bums and adventurers. For communing with bohemians and the dazed and confused set, head to Ocean Beach. For a wave-riding initiation, La Jolla Shores is the place. The scenic cliffs and caves block south swells, creating a protected bay for most of the year. Even if your idea of hanging 10 is holding onto the rim of a basketball hoop, the vivacious and confidence-instilling instructors at Surf Diva (2160 Avenida de la Playa) will have you up and riding in no time. Private one-hour surf lessons can be had for $93.50 or $99 for Stand Up Paddleboarding, with lower per-person rates for small groups.

Après-surf

Recap the day's exploits while sipping on something at Hard Rock Hotel San Diego's rooftop bar FLOAT, a posh lounge with firepits and cocktail waitresses in outfits snatched from Jessie J's closet.

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Where to warm yourself in Quebec's winter wonderland

Stay in. Ward off the chill by trying out some of these indoor activities in the Carnaval community

ANDREW JOHN VIRTUE DOBSON
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The Fairmont Le Château Frontenac has a wine and cheese bar featuring one of the largest varieties of Quebec cheese in Canada. ANDREW DOBSON/METRO

No other centre in Canada celebrates winter quite like Quebec City, with pristine snow coating the landscape, giving the appearance everything is all tucked away in a snow globe.

It's a city known for being downright frigid, but luckily there's ample opportunity to rest and relax in wondrous warmth.

Plant yourself in Old Quebec at the toasty warm boutique property Hotel 71, located in the building that was once the National Bank of Canada's first head office. The building's facade is a stunning example of 19th century neo-classic architecture while its interior features 60 contemporary rooms and suites. Peek outside for views of the mighty St. Lawrence River.

The Fairmont Le Château Frontenac is the city's iconic castle, which has recently undergone a $74-million renovation. Your best bet for a sip and nibble is at 1608 Wine and Cheese Bar, featuring one of the largest varieties of top Quebec fromage in Canada, from their very own gilded Cheese Room.

The bar features a dazzling chandelier show, stuffed Canada geese which appear to fly out of the wall, and an eclectic selection of furniture which makes one want to cosy up to the fireplace, crack open a book and cuddle with a cocktail.

Located along the St. Lawrence River at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Spa des Neiges offers a relaxing and memorable stay for those who enjoy the great outdoors.

This Nordic-inspired spa offers three outdoor thermal baths, sauna, steam room, teepees and relaxation rooms with a view. I'll never forget moving off my massage table like a zombie, pulling on a white robe and flip-flops and marching into the winter's cold to bob up and down in a steaming al fresco bath!

You haven't been to Quebec unless you've taken a moment to pause over a steaming bowl of poutine. Leave your calorie counter at the door and step into the Chic Shack. The trendy restaurant offers local craft beer and divine gelato mixed milkshakes which pair perfectly with poutine. Enjoy a classic with gravy and curds or switch it up with Coq Au Vin and Mushroom Ragout inspired indulgences.

Come to Carnaval!

- Cheer for the chilly at Quebec's 61st annual Carnaval, North America's most popular winter festival, which runs till Feb. 15. Wave hello to the festival's iconic mascot Bonhomme and sip hot cocoa while touring his awe-inspiring ice castle. Game of Thrones fans will notice a special treat at the festival this year as HBO Canada commissioned local ice sculptor Marc Lepire to replicate the show's iconic Iron Throne out of ice. The Ice Throne was unveiled on the eve of the festival and marks the official launch of the show's fourth season on Blue-ray and DVD, available across Canada on Feb. 17.

Deal

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Intrepid Travel is offering 20 per cent off a few of its top Island Getaways, until Feb. 28 for travel through April 30. Just in time for spring break, these small-group trips could see you in Belize, Bali, Sri Lanka or Galapagos, or sailing through the Greek islands or along Italy's Amalfi Coast. Save almost $1,000 on the 10-day Complete Galapagos adventure, departing March 23. Visit IntrepidTravel.com.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

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Kale shows off its hearty side in a soup

This Chunky Sausage and Kale Soup recipe serves six to eight. EMILY RICHARDS

Dinner. The green that is typically thrown into smoothies or salads is the star in this warming dish that also features potatoes and sausage

DINNER EXPRESS
Emily Richards
food@metronews.ca

The month of February is the perfect time to enjoy some great sports and, of course, delicious food.

Even though football has died down, basketball and hockey are holding strong, along with curling and the golf tournaments that make me wish for warmer weather.

So as I was thinking about all these hard-working athletes and what I would cook for them, my mind went to a winter warm-up recipe in which soup grabs the spotlight.

I'm convinced soup would hit the spot for many athletes and sport watchers alike.

So here is a great winter warm-up soup that is easy to serve to your family for a weeknight meal or to friends when they come over to watch the game. It also works well for a lunchtime meal.

This soup has a rich broth full of sausage, potatoes and greens that add fibre and a hearty taste.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lb (500 g) fresh chorizo, Italian, farmer's or chicken sausages
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 each carrot and celery stalk, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 Yukon Gold potatoes, (about 1 1/2 lbs/750 g) peeled and chopped
- 10 cups (2.5 l) low-sodium beef stock
- 1 small bunch kale, with the tough ribs removed
- Half bunch Swiss chard, trimmed

Directions

1. In large soup pot, heat oil over medium-high heat and brown sausages on all sides. Remove to cutting board, cut into slices and return to pot.

2. Add onions, carrot, celery and garlic and cook, stirring for about 5 minutes or until softened. Add potatoes and stock. Bring to boil, cover and reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender when pierced with fork.

3. Meanwhile, chop kale and Swiss chard to make about 12 cups (3 litres) of lightly packed greens. Add to sausage mixture and simmer uncovered for about 15 minutes or until greens are tender.

Clams, croutons and broth — oh, my!

Ingredients

- 3 slices French or Italian bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- Olive oil cooking spray
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp butter
- 4 shallots, sliced
- 1/2 lbs soy chorizo sausage, casings removed (if any)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup dry white wine
- 2 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1/2 cup water
- 3/4 bunch kale, stems discarded, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 2 lbs fresh clams, scrubbed
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Heat the oven to 350 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with kitchen parchment or foil.

2. Arrange bread cubes on the prepared baking sheet, then mist with olive oil, tossing to coat all sides. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, then toast in the oven until golden, about 10 minutes, stirring halfway through. Remove croutons from oven and allow to cool.

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3. Meanwhile, make soup. In a large, heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the shallots and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 5 minutes. Crumble the soy chorizo and add to the pot. Cook until lightly golden, about another 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook another minute, or until very fragrant.

4. Sprinkle with flour, then stir. Increase heat to medium-high and add the wine, stirring constantly for about 1 minute to deglaze the pan. Add the chicken stock and water, then bring to a simmer. Taste and season with salt and pepper, as needed.

5. Stir in the kale, then add the clams. Cover the pot and let the clams steam just until they open, about 4 minutes, removing the clams as they open and discarding any that don't. Remove the pot from heat and stir in the opened clams. Stir in the lemon juice, then ladle into serving bowls. Top with croutons and parsley. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ MELISSA D'ARABIAN, AN EXPERT ON HEALTHY EATING ON A BUDGET AND AUTHOR OF SUPERMARKET HEALTHY.**

CALGARY-BOW PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION - NOTICE OF NOMINATION MEETING

PC Alberta Calgary Bow

The Calgary-Bow PC Association is seeking nominations for individuals interested in becoming the candidate to represent the constituency and the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta in the next provincial election. The nomination period to obtain information, complete the nomination papers, and pay the nomination fee will commence today, Wednesday February 11, 2015 and will close at NOON on Saturday February 21, 2015. The nomination meeting (if necessary) will be held at 9 am (polls hrs 9:30-2pm) on March 7, 2015 at the Bowness Scout Hall 8551 Bowness Road NW. Voters shall be members in good standing of the PCAA, must ordinarily reside in Calgary-Bow, be a Canadian citizen, and be at least 14 years of age. When voting, members must show PCAA Membership card, and two (2) pieces of identification, at least one of which must be photo identification. The boundaries of Calgary-Bow are the south bank of the Bow River as the northern and western boundary; Sarcee Tr W to Bow Tr SW as the western boundary; 12 Ave SW/ Bow Tr SW as the south boundary; western city limits as the western and southern boundary. Interested parties may obtain further information, sets of nomination papers and details of the nomination process from the Nomination Chairperson, Josh Traptow at president@calgarybowpc.ca or 403-837-7359.

Finding an inclusive work environment

Career. How to know if an employer is welcoming towards individuals with disabilities

CAROLINE RUDOLPH-ZBARSKY
TalentEgg.ca

Getting a job if you have a disability can be easier than you might think if you know where to look.

Today, companies want to be more inclusive of the Canadian workforce and more reflective of the customers that they serve.

My experience as an employment specialist has shown me that companies often don't know where to go to find diverse talent. Recent graduates with disabilities are often afraid to apply for their ideal positions for fear of discrimination through the recruitment process without realizing those employers may be seeking someone with precisely their profile. Below are a few tips for finding employers committed to recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) partnerships

Identifying employers that sponsor, partner with and/or support organizations and associations committed to D&I is one way to know if an employer is inclusive. Such employers typically have a culture that is open, accommodating, and values diversity. Research which employers support these efforts.

There are numerous major Canadian D&I organizations worth checking out.

Here are some of my favourites:

- The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI): This organization provides tools and support to employers looking to become more inclusive.

- The Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN): With more than 60 employer partners, their Business Leadership Network consists of more than 30 employers who are committed to promoting the hiring of persons with disabilities.

- Canadian Business SenseAbility: A national organization run by private-sector business leaders aiming to accelerate business success through the talents of persons with disabilities.

The Google test

When evaluating a company's commitment to D&I, start with a simple online search, which can be surprisingly effective.

Companies aren't shy about communicating and promoting their values: They want clients, staff, prospective employees and stakeholders to know their organizational beliefs, goals and commitments.

When attracting the best talent, they want to demonstrate why they are an employer of choice. It's also good for business; people prefer to deal with companies with good cultures and core values.

Searching for the employer 'name + diversity + Canada' gives a pretty good overview of their commitment level.

Check their website to see if they have a diversity section, learn about their inclusive practices, what causes they support and their current initiatives.

Companies that support inclusive hiring will make an effort to highlight this on a diversity page.

Are they award-winning?

To be recognized with an award, companies must be doing a few things right. Numerous organizations recognize the efforts of employers who are making an impact with their diversity and inclusion practices.

The two following awards are to me the more prestigious out there. Take a look at the lists and see which employers have won awards and why.

The Canada's Best Diversity Employers list recognizes Canadian employers with "exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs." The 100 winning employers (all in Canada) are a strong core of more than 3,500 companies that participated in the competition.

Both the DiversityInc Top 50 List and the DiversityInc Top 10 Companies For People With Disabilities are a rich database of inclusive global companies with operations in Canada.

Their ranking mechanism is quite detailed, including factors such as inclusiveness of their career application process, the level of on-the-job accommodations offered, their focus on working with vendors owned by persons with disabilities and the presence of certain benefits such as telecommuting and employee resource groups.

Major conferences and job fairs

Participation and support of diversity and inclusion events are great indicators of the level of inclusiveness at a particular company. Companies attend these events because it is important to their values.

- At recruiting sessions, they are looking for diverse talent. Here you can meet and network with individuals responsible for recruitment initiatives to promote inclusion at their organizations. At conferences and seminars advocating for inclusive practices you can connect with employers, who support these initiatives.

- You can also follow organizations committed to D&I on Twitter and LinkedIn and join their mailing lists to ensure you don't miss out on any upcoming events.

With the right employer, you can find a perfect fit, including accommodations in both the infrastructure and the workplace culture itself. ISTOCK

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Bombers get busy on Day 1 of free agency

CFL. Winnipeg adds five players, including former Calgary offensive lineman Bryant

The Tiger-Cats' Ted Laurent, left, and Stanley Bryant of the Stampeders exchange words during the Grey Cup in November. The Blue Bombers signed Bryant on Tuesday. JEFF VINNICK/GETTY IMAGES

Kyle Walters didn't waste any time making a splash on the free-agent market.

The Winnipeg Blue Bombers GM added five players Tuesday, the first day of CFL free agency. Walters bolstered his offensive line by coming to terms with American Stanley Bryant and signing fellow offensive lineman Marc Dile, international receiver Darvin Adams as well as defensive lineman Ivan Brown and linebacker Sam Hurl, both Canadians.

Waters' free-agent activity wasn't surprising, given Winnipeg (7-11) missed the CFL playoffs last year and is hosting the 2015 Grey Cup game.

Improving an offensive line that allowed a league-high 71 sacks was definitely an off-season priority for Walters. And he reportedly signed Bryant, a towering six-foot-five, 313-pound tackle who spent the last five seasons with the Calgary Stampeders, to a deal worth $160,000 annually to help keep starter Drew Willy upright.

Six-foot-four, 300-pound Dile spent the last three seasons with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. The Florida native was a starter in 2012 but battled injuries the last two years. Brown, a 29-year-old Regina native, is entering his seventh CFL season having also played for Montreal, Hamilton and Toronto.

Ottawa announced the signing of receiver Ernest Jackson but also reportedly reached deals with receivers Brad Sinopoli and Greg Ellingson and offensive lineman SirVincent Rogers. The Redblacks posted a league-worst 2-16 record in their inaugural season, finishing ranked last in scoring (15.4 points per game), TDs (24), passing touchdowns (14) and rushing (82.4 yards) and allowed 56 sacks.

Jackson had 49 catches for 813 yards with three TDs — all career highs — last year with B.C. The six-foot-two, 220-pound native of Rochester, N.Y., recorded 80 receptions for 1,192 yards and four touchdowns over three seasons with the Lions.

"He's a big receiver," Ottawa GM Marcel Desjardins said. "Obviously he's a guy who can make an impact."

Ottawa did lose Canadian offensive lineman Alex Krausnick, who signed with Edmonton. Oddly, the Eskimos lost Krausnick to the Redblacks in the 2013 CFL expansion draft.

Hamilton, the East Division champion the last two seasons, signed Canadian Spencer Watt. The six-foot-two, 180-pound native of North Vancouver, B.C., spent the last five years with Toronto, registering 135 catches for 1,715 yards and nine TDs while battling an assortment of injuries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lions

Before the noon ET start of free agency, B.C. re-signed American linebackers Solomon Elimimian and Adam Bighill to extensions through the 2017 season.

NHL

Bettman not committed to team in Vegas

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman spent Tuesday touring an arena under construction on the Las Vegas Strip, shilling for season-ticket sales, and posing for pictures with showgirls and the man who wants to bring the first major professional sports franchise to the gambling city. Then he insisted the NHL has barely given the issue of expansion a second thought.

While Bettman was careful not to commit the NHL to Las Vegas, his presence at prospective owner Bill Foley's kickoff campaign was surely noted far beyond the Las Vegas Strip. And Foley and others seemed confident that once the goal of 10,000 season-ticket sales is realized, it won't be long before the NHL comes forward with an expansion franchise for the city. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Order of Hockey

Quinn headlines 2015 class

Pat Quinn, Serge Savard and Jim Gregory have been named to the 2015 class of the Order of Hockey in Canada.

Quinn coached Team Canada to its first Olympic gold medal in 50 years at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games. He also led the nation to gold at the 2004 World Cup of Hockey, the 2008 under-18 world championship and the 2009 world junior championship.

He died in Vancouver on Nov. 23 following a long illness. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Canada's top kayaker lives on the road

'Poorly funded.' Set on making the Pan Am and Olympic Games, Ben Hayward says building his house on wheels 'was the only way'

Ben Hayward's home measures about seven square metres and is currently parked in an overflow lot in southern France.

Hayward lives and travels in a camper van he built from scratch on a flatbed truck, combining his background in architecture with his need to live and train in Europe on the cheap.

His "Hobbit Van," as he fondly refers to it, resembles a hobbit house on four wheels, complete with a round hobbit door.

"It's actually a really nice space to live in," he says.

Quoted

"Pretty much this was the only way."

Ben Hayward explaining that lack of funding pushed led him to live on wheels.

Hayward is coming off the best season of his career, making two World Cup finals, finishing sixth and ninth in men's K1. He won Canadian national titles in four different disciplines. He has his sights on a strong showing at this summer's Pan American Games in Toronto and a spot on Canada's Olympic team for Rio in 2016.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ben Hayward and his "Hobbit Van." CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Baseball

A-Rod apologizes to Yankees' brass

Alex Rodriguez met with top New York Yankees officials on Tuesday and apologized to the team as he prepares to report to spring training following his season-long suspension for violations of baseball's drug agreement and labour contract.

Rodriguez was accompanied by lawyer Jim Sharp.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Premier League

Mario Balotelli strikes back

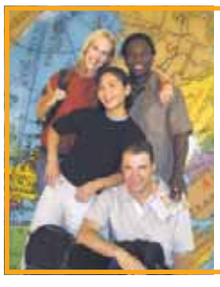
Mario Balotelli came off the bench to grab a late winning goal for Liverpool in a 3-2 victory over Tottenham in the Premier League on Tuesday, boosting his team's chances of Champions League qualification.

Out of favour at Anfield, Balotelli entered in the 73rd minute and scored his first league goal for Liverpool 10 minutes later.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lightning switched off

Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Brett Connolly, left, and Nashville Predators defenceman Anthony Bitetto fight in the Predators' 3-2 home win in Nashville, Tenn. MARK HUMPHREY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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2015 GMC Yukon

- **Type.** Four-door, seven- or eight-passenger full-size SUV
- **Engines.** 5.3-litre V8 (355 hp), 6.2-litre V8 (420)
- **Transmissions.** 6- or 8-speed automatic
- **Price.** $51,850 base, $64,900 as-tested

Market position

GM says that one out of every three full-size, truck-based SUVs sold in Canada is a Yukon or Denali. In this limited segment, only the domestics offer two wheelbase lengths or a choice of engines.

Points

- The eight-speed transmission in the Denali is expected to make its way to other Yukon models eventually.
- The Denali includes an air-levelling suspension system and Magnetic Ride Control, which almost instantly tightens or softens the ride to match road conditions.
- Alert system warns about forward traffic or lane departure by vibrating the seat.

The first two rows are roomy, but the third row is very cramped.

Interesting features

Rear-view camera, oil and transmission cooler, front and rear park assist, rain-sensing wipers and remote starter are all standard; heated and cooled seats, power-folding third-row seat, adaptive cruise control, a rear-seat entertainment system, and power liftgate are all optional.

Do you want big, or bigger?

Review. GMC Yukon offers two wheelbase lengths and seating for eight, but is still light and nimble to drive

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

PHOTOS: JIL MCINTOSH

Although the full-size SUV segment is not as large as it once was, the remaining players are as big as ever.

The all-new 2015 GMC Yukon is available in two "big and bigger" wheelbase lengths, and with seating for up to eight people.

It's based on the GMC Sierra pickup that was completely overhauled for 2014, although it doesn't share any of that truck's exterior panels.

The base SLE trim line and my tester, the SLT, use the Sierra's 5.3-litre V8 engine and come in two-wheel drive, or, as in my vehicle, four-wheel drive.

Pricing ranges from $51,850 to $64,900. You can also get a luxurious top-line Denali trim, which uses a 6.2-litre V8 and comes only as a 4x4, for $74,600.

My tester was the regular-wheelbase model, but you can also get the extended-length Yukon XL in all trim lines, which adds $3,050 to the price of each.

All Yukon models have three rows of seats, but the XL gives you more legroom and extra cargo space behind the third row.

For all its size, the Yukon doesn't feel as big as it is when you're driving it, thanks to light steering and quick response.

When full power isn't needed, such as when you're cruising at a steady speed, the engine shuts off half its cylinders to save gas. It happens so seamlessly that you usually have to depend on the display in the instrument cluster to tell you when it's only feeding fuel to four cylinders.

The interior is as well-finished as you'd expect for the price, with simple controls that are easy to use.

The first and second rows are roomy, but the third row is perched over the rear axle and, as a result, there's very little room for your knees and the seating position isn't very comfortable.

For those who prefer the Chevrolet nameplate, the Tahoe and longer-wheelbase Suburban are mechanically identical to the Yukon, but have differences in their trim packages and lower starting prices.

Compare

1 Ford Expedition
Base price: $50,299
Two wheelbase lengths, but the sole engine choice is a 365-hp, 3.5-litre EcoBoost V6.

2 Toyota Sequoia
Base price: $53,885
Based on the Tundra pickup, Sequoia uses that model's 5.7-litre V8 and is 4WD only.

3 Nissan Armada
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Armada comes only in one fully loaded Platinum trim, with a 5.6-litre V8 engine.

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What test car is Garry bringing us this week? We literally have no clue what will roll into the driveway until it's here, but who are we to doubt Garry Sowerby, who has a bazillion Guinness records for around-the-world driving? That's a bazillion more than we have, after all.
Come along and find out as we drive 'em, dirty 'em and shoot 'em with our phone cams. These are real-life, no-glam reviews.

JEFF MELNYCHUK
wheelbasemedia.com

Sporty and fun — all year round

Special delivery. You may look nuts driving it in the winter, but the Audi TT-S is even more fun on ice and snow, when grip is limited

With the right tires, the Audi TT-S is formidable and fun in all seasons. It is not a summer-only car, nor should it be for a cost of $63,000. JEFF MELNYCHUK PHOTOS

We don't ask where world-record road-tripper Garry Sowerby has been since we saw him last, because it makes us jealous — and also so the authorities can't brain-wash it out of us. It's safer for everyone, really.

But, for whatever reason, he always seems to bring me the coolest cars in the worst possible weather.

Case in point: Garry slides up in a shiny Imola Yellow Audi TT-S, and it has been the messiest and slipperiest stretch of crap weather we've had so far in this miserable winter.

I hate winter.

Can you tell?

But even normal people who are not Garry don't get why the TT is here, now.

"Do they not know where we live?" says a buddy from my gym who spies it in the parking lot.

I don't think Audi cares. The cars are made of metal, not sugar. It doesn't matter what time of year it is or what's under the tires.

My personal car is an Audi R8 and, with the right tires, it could be driven year-round, no problem.

So, while everyone else thinks Audi is nuts — and, by association, that I'm nuts for driving one in this weather — I don't care, either.

The Quattro all-wheel drive makes the TT-S formidable and fun in all seasons, especially in this icy junk, where the limits of grip are so dreadfully low. It's not a summer-only car, nor should it be for a cost of $63,000, plus tax.

Quoted

"Yeah, a Corvette has more power for less money, and probably looks better. But you're not going to see one of those out in a blizzard."

Yeah, a Corvette has more power for less money, and it's a newer design and probably looks better.

But you're not going to see one of those out in a blizzard, are you? At least not right-side up. That means you'll need another vehicle for the winter, and some place to store the Corvette.

With the rear seats folded, the hatch offers loads of cargo space.

The TT-S needs no such winter pinch-hitter, just the right winter tires.

However, something like an Audi S4 sedan or S5 coupe would provide more room. The TT has a back seat, but it's probably better-suited for surprise store purchases than the seating of two humans.

The great part is how much cargo room there is in the hatch when the rear seat is folded flat. It's a narrow space, but it's long. Good for road trips or bringing home 2x4s. Really.

The S has been at the top of the TT food chain since the raunchy, 360-horsepower RS exited the picture. But the TT-S is just as much fun.

Unfortunately, even with winter tires, the TT-S is in a constant state of traction-control intervention on anything but dry roads, partly because the 265-horsepower, four-cylinder engine — which is exclusive to the TT-S — has plenty of mid-range turbo-charged torque to break the tires free.

The TT has a back seat, but it's not really designed for two humans.

The paddle-shift transmission feels like it's tied to my thoughts rather than my fingers and, at each gear change when the engine revs drop, there's a cute little "blll-laaaap" farting sound coming out the quad tailpipes.

I laugh. Often.

The S is at the top of the TT food chain, since the satisfyingly raunchy 360-horsepower RS is out of the picture. I have to say the TT-S is just as much fun, but the difference in low-speed power between the two is night and day.

Until the TT-S starts making some revs, the pedal is almost dead. It just won't launch hard. Base TT models have 211 horsepower, but the same peak torque as the TT-S.

There's a new TT coming for 2016 with more power and likely a higher price. Get yours with winter tires. It's fun.

High-lows

WOWS: A yellow sports car in the dead of winter has the effect of a defibrillator. Baseball stitching for the seats never gets old. Shockingly little tire gap with the fenders. Its mid-range power reminds us of the TT-RS. Perfect winter transport while Corvettes sleep.

HMMS: Back seat? Funny. No matter how you slice it, $63,000 is a lot o' cash for 265 hp and all-wheel drive. Silver exterior accents? Uh, no, subtle is better.

Marketing EVs in the face of cheap gas

Green. Despite lower prices at the pumps, automakers are banking on eco-friendly models

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

The 2016 Volt is an EV. CONTRIBUTED

"Show 'em what you got" is poor English.

But it's a decent way to describe the approach automakers must take during auto-show season, which we're in the thick of right at the moment.

The Detroit and Montreal shows kicked off the 2015 season in mid-January, and the doors are about to swing open for the vehicular spectacles in Chicago and Toronto, with the latter event beginning this coming weekend.

At Detroit, Chevrolet showed us it "got" electric car goodies.

It trotted out both the second-generation and all-new Chevrolet Volt, and the newly conceived Bolt.

Unlike Volt, Bolt doesn't have a gasoline engine to constantly recharge its electric motor. The Bolt is a pure EV (electric vehicle).

Both vehicles will be front and centre at GM's stand in Toronto, and their timing is as much a talking point as their respective technologies, arriving as they are in the midst of the lowest gas price stretch we've had since 2010-ish.

The new 2016 Volt officially goes on sale some time in the latter half of this year.

The Bolt hasn't even been given the green light for production — though everyone is expecting GM to do so at the Chicago show.

Big and nasty gas prices could have given both these nameplates a shot of marketing and awareness adrenalin.

But now they just wade into another swampish period where we wonder whether EVs are going to fly long-term or not.

Why pay extra for an EV and/or plug-in hybrid, when you might have even more trouble getting your investment back using electricity, the cheaper fuel?

Quoted

According to Elon Musk of Tesla fame, we need make the switch to electric vehicles because they are the better way, the cleaner way, and the way that will inevitably be the winning way. So why not make it happen now?
Mike Goetz

And why should automakers keep plowing development money into EV programs when mainstream consumers are not ready to make the switch?

Well, according to Elon Musk of Tesla fame, we should be figuring out other ways to get consumers to switch over, because current oil prices are not, in his words, "an adequate forcing function."

We need to make the switch, he opines, because EVs are the better way, and the cleaner way, and the way that will inevitably be the winning way, so why not make it happen now?

He is certainly trying. Musk recently opened up his patents to other automakers, and offered to let non-Tesla EVs use his planned private network of charging stations.

For his part, Carlos Ghosn, the top executive at both Nissan and Renault, and the auto industry's other big EV advocate, feels that EVs are the only way to achieve strict and necessary emission mandates, and warns that gas prices have the propensity to rise and fluctuate over time.

It's interesting that both these competitors are calling on their industry counterparts to build more EVs, so both infrastructure developments and EV acceptance can happen faster.

While GM's pending introduction of the Bolt might be a direct competitor to Tesla's smaller and upcoming Model 3, Musk didn't see it all as a threat.

In fact, he called it "progress."

For EV enthusiasts

- The latest electric cars will be on display at the Canadian International Auto Show runs from Feb. 13 to 22 in Toronto

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World Car of the Year finalists announced

The shortlist for one of the auto world's most coveted awards has been revealed ahead of the awards ceremony in New York this April.

The 10 finalists that will compete for the title of 2015 World Car of the Year are the BMW 2 Series Active Tourer, the Citroën C4 Cactus, the Ford Mustang, the Hyundai Genesis, the Jeep Renegade, the Mazda2, the Mercedes-Benz C-Class, the MINI 5 door / MINI 4 door, the Nissan Qashqai, and the Volkswagen Passat.

The winner will be chosen by a jury of 75 international motoring journalists who have put each of the cars through their paces and the prize awarded on Thursday, April 2 at the New York International Auto Show.

For all categories except the Green Car award, the jury will simply vote for the winner via a secret ballot, whereas the winning green car will be selected in part by a panel of green technology experts who have set the final shortlist of candidates based on their environmentally friendly credentials.

BMW 2-Series Active Tourer. CONTRIBUTED

The final five cars, which this year includes the BMW i8, Hyundai x35 / Tucson Fuel Cell, Kia Soul EV, Volvo XC90 T8 Twin Engine, and the Volkswagen Golf GTE, will be tested and reviewed by the main panel of judges and a winner selected.

As well as the overall winner, prizes will also be given in a number of other categories including Luxury Car of the Year, Performance Car of the Year and Green Car of the Year.

BMW must be hopeful of its chances at this year's ceremony as it has models nominated in every category.

AFP

Hyundai's Tucson hydrogen-powered fuel-cell CUV coming soon to Canada

Hyundai says it will be the first automotive company to make hydrogen-fuel-cell electric vehicles available in Canada, and has launched a dedicated website to find the first Canadian customer.

The Tucson fuel-cell electric will be available to customers on a three-year-lease, starting this spring in the Vancouver area. "We're planting the seed for a new segment of the industry," said Hyundai Canada CEO Don Romano.

The challenge facing hydrogen-powered vehicles, he said, has been characterized by a chicken-and-egg scenario "where car companies won't bring fuel-cell vehicles to market without an infrastructure, and there is no need for a refuelling industry without customers."

In fuel-cell vehicles, hydrogen is converted to electricity to power electric drive motors. A fill-up takes about five minutes.

Honda seeks energy efficiency from wind power

Honda has unveiled a wind farm in Brazil that generates enough electricity to meet the needs of its car-production plant in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in southernmost Brazil. Honda says it is the first automaker to open a wind farm in that country, and expects the facility to generate all the electricity needed for its annual production, currently about 140,000 units, reports Green Car Reports. Honda has experimented with wind power before, installing turbines at its transmission plant in Ohio, although on a much smaller scale. The $47-million Brazil project is part of Honda's goal to cut its overall carbon-dioxide emissions by 30 per cent by 2020.

Shift: Feats in engineering promise greater mobility, increased fuel efficiency and incomparable style

Tiny Spira4u seeks global markets

Pilot production is underway in China for the electric- and gasoline-powered sub-subcompact Spira4u three-wheel urban vehicle, which marketers hope to bring to North America. Conceived as a low-cost (to make, own and operate) and hyper-economical vehicle, the Spira4u is an Automotive XPrize finalist and a cross between a car and a motorcycle. Its soft, honeycomb-composite structure protects up to two occupants in a collision, and the body from significant damage in parking lot fender-benders. The $6,200 gas-powered model delivers a top speed of 85 km/h and fuel efficiency of 2.9 L/100 km. The electric version reaches 100 km/h and goes 450 km per charge with one motor. A much faster two-motor model is also available.

The Spira4u is a bumper car that can shrug off light collisions. Made in China, the three-wheeler may be coming to North America soon.

Shift points

- Israeli company Storedot says it is a year away from marketing an electric-car battery that can be fully recharged in three minutes. If true and even remotely affordable, it would revolutionize the EV industry, putting it on equal refuel footing with gas engines.
- Johnson Controls says it has developed a small lithium-ion battery for use in vehicle stop-start systems, reports Automotive News. About the size of a tissue box and weighing just four kilograms, it can double current stop-start efficiency to eight per cent.
- Mazda says its 2016 MX-5 will be the first vehicle to incorporate parts made from a new bio-plastic it developed. The plastic is based on plant materials instead of petroleum, and does not require painting.

Detroit electric sports car still at least a year away

Wannabe electric sports car manufacturer Detroit Electric has revealed its Lotus Evora-based SP:01 model in production trim, but says the vehicle won't be available until sometime in 2016, pending further testing. Production is set to take place in the United Kingdom, reports MotorAuthority, and the first models should roll off the production line later this year. Markets confirmed to date include the United States, Europe and Asia. Propulsion comes from a single electric motor rated at 285 horsepower with drive sent to the rear wheels only. Buyers can expect a zero-to-96 km/h time of 3.7 seconds, a top speed of 250 km/h and a driving range per charge of about 290 kilometres.

ALL STORIES AND PHOTOS FROM WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM

This is the production version of the Detroit Electric SP:01, but it's more than a year away.

Kenguru EV hops on mobility bandwagon

Promising wheelchair-bound travellers a level of personal mobility never before possible, the first drive-from-wheelchair electric vehicle is under production in Pflugerville, Tex. The single-occupant Kenguru has a lone rear door that is operated by remote control, allowing the driver to wheel in, strap in, take control of the vehicle and, within seconds, be good to go. Designed more for urban areas than the open road, the 550-kilogram Hungarian-designed Kenguru is powered by two rear-axle electric motors, has a top speed of 50 km/h and a range of 70 to 110 kilometres per charge. It sells for about $31,000, before applying any electric-vehicle or mobility assistance funding that might be available in the buyer's jurisdiction.

Just drive in, lock down and drive off. Designed for drivers in a wheelchair, the Kenguru has a top speed of 50 km/h and a range of up to 110 km. It sells for about $31,000.

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Be more assertive about your opinions today, especially if you've kept your thoughts to yourself for a while. You don't have to shout but let others know what you believe.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Others will go out of their way to keep you quiet today, because the truth is not what they want to hear. If you find yourself at odds with powerful people, don't back down.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Be careful who you trust on the work front today because someone you think is a friend could be plotting to undermine your position.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Now that Mercury, planet of the mind, is moving in your favour again you won't have much trouble working out what needs to be done. Get your financial affairs in order.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You will hear something to your advantage over the next 24 hours. Don't be reluctant to believe it just because the source of the information has not always been reliable.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Partnerships and relationships will be under important stars as the month moves on, so clear the decks for action now.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your latest project will be a success, despite recent setbacks. Don't worry that you have not made as much progress as you would have liked. There is still plenty of time to get it right.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You should find it easier now to get along with people who, for one reason or another, have been a bit stand-offish of late.

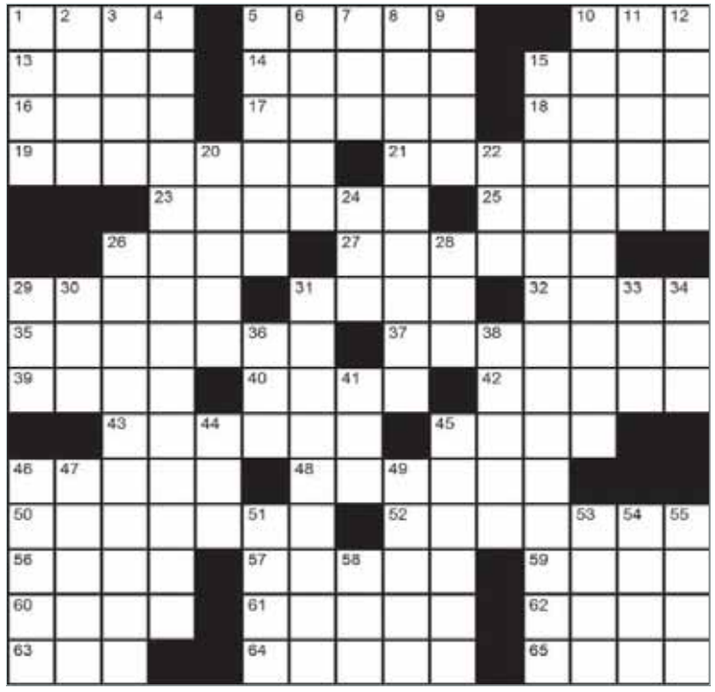
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If you get the chance to do a good deed for a friend over the next two or three days don't wait to be asked, just wade in and put things right for them.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Something that has been tormenting you these past few weeks will no longer seem such a problem after today. You will also be delighted to discover that you are not as poor financially as you thought.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Something that has gone wrong on several occasions over the past two or three weeks will start going right again as of today, which will lead to an improved outlook.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will learn something you find hard to believe today. It has been in plain sight for a while, which begs the question: How did you manage to miss it?

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



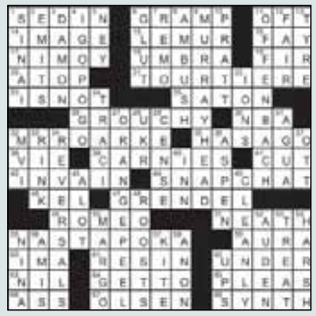
Across

1. Fort __ Hill (Historic coastal artillery base in Colwood on Vancouver Island)
5. Economy class
10. Football positions, briefly
13. Helm position
14. 'Straight'-meaning prefix
15. Mouse-like critter
16. Type size
17. Bargain
18. Garfield's sidekick
19. 1982 Dustin Hoffman movie
21. Discount shoe store
23. 1965 to 1971 sitcom, "__ Heroes"
25. At _ __ (With consequences)
26. Scientology founder, _. __ Hubbard
27. Violinist Mr. Perlman
29. Stream
31. Kimono accessories
32. Robert De Who?
35. April Wine's "Just __ You and Me"
37. Gambling spots
39. Betty __ (Vintage cartoon/comic)
40. Hide-and-go-__
42. The Cremation of Sam __ (Yukon-set poem by Robert Service)
43. Australian airline
45. Jiffs
46. "It's _ __ thing." (Definitely)
48. __ Friday (Office's tie-less day)
50. President's Choice product, Deluxe White __ Macaroni & Cheese Dinner
52. Condense, literature-style
56. "The Littlest __" (Canuck dog series)
57. Disturbs
59. Grub
60. Balanced
61. Basket fibre
62. Lilypad lazer
63. __ hall (Student hangout)
64. Strong point
65. Scottish 'since'

Down

1. Bewitched
2. Oil: Italian
3. Design style, with Art
4. It comes 'two minutes too late' in Alanis Morissette's "Ironic": 3 wds.
5. Jointly endorse on the dotted line
6. "Coffee __ __?" (Restaurant query)
7. Chowed chowder
8. Dried lips balm
9. Greeting in Granada!
10. Blackie and the __ __ (Hamilton band)
11. Walking on air feeling
12. View, Bible-style
15. Steep formations in Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland: 2 wds.
20. District on Vancouver Island's southern tip
22. James Ingram/Michael McDonald hit: "__ Mo B There"
24. Bill
26. Scratch tickets overseer in Montreal, __-__
28. Half of Ms. Gabor
29. 'Start With Trust' is this org.'s slogan
30. Vintage auto
31. Crossword's beginning...: 2 wds.
33. Eggs of fish
34. 'Lact' suffix
36. Approx.
38. Besmirch
41. NASA-like org. headquartered in Paris
44. '90s sitcom, "__ and Stacey"
45. Group within a group
46. Sore one
47. Rudely push
49. Room: French
51. Diva's vocal
53. Ellen DeGeneres-voiced fish in "Finding Nemo" (2003)
54. Hooligan
55. Cutting-__
58. TGIF part

Yesterday's Crossword

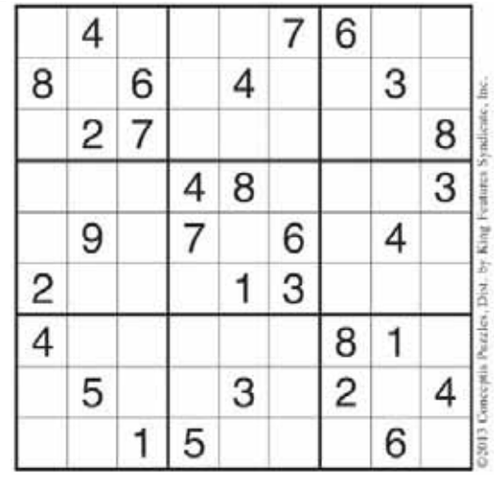


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

1	7	3	9	6	5	2	4	8
9	4	8	7	2	1	5	3	6
6	5	2	8	3	4	9	7	1
3	6	4	2	7	9	1	8	5
2	8	7	1	5	3	6	9	4
5	1	9	6	4	8	3	2	7
4	3	6	5	8	2	7	1	9
7	2	1	4	9	6	8	5	3
8	9	5	3	1	7	4	6	2

What's an 8 letter word that avoids bankruptcy?

1P	R	O	P	O	S	A	L

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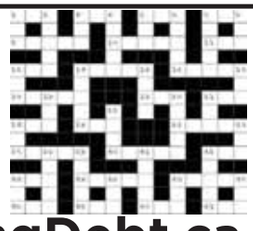

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